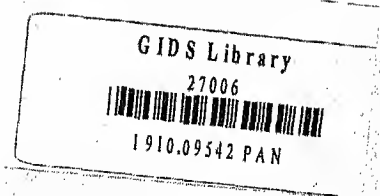


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Dr. P. N. PANDE

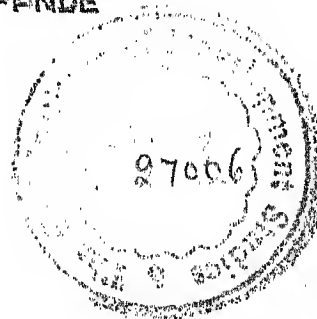


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GIRI INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
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LUCKNOW - 226 024
1997

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**TOURISM IN UTTARAKHAND:
PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS**

DR. P.N. PANDE

The hill region of Uttar Pradesh, with its rich culture and religious heritage, fascinating scenic beauty and wonderful flora and fauna has immense tourist potential. Tourism is a remunerative and growing industry which has several aspects. It includes all aspects of trade, such as transport, shop keeping, catering, entertainment, refreshment, meals, information, sanitation and other various services which are purchased by the visitors. For promotion of tourism, it is essential to provide decent and comfortable accommodation and food at reasonable price, sufficient transport services, shopping and entertainments including sports, facilities for seeing wild life, to make environmental improvements and to organise conducted cultural and pilgrim tours. The growth of tourism industry depends on the weather, tour mindness programme, attraction of tourist station, transport and accommodation facilities, activities organised by government, security, the price structure, income levels and other services in the tourist place.

Tourism and influx of pilgrims have a vital role in the economy of Uttarakhand. The response of tourist income has a great significance in the local economic system. The multiplier effect of this response is a typical phenomenon working on income and employment scales together. The tourist places of Uttarakhand occupy pride of place on the tourist map of India. The resorts in the hill region are indeed a tourist paradise; offering to the tourists religious shrine, aesthetic landscape, scenic beauty and a variety of sports. The magnitude of incoming tourists in Uttarakhand has shown a consistent increasing trend for the last two decades.

Places of tourist interest in Uttarakhand

Places of tourist interest in Uttarakhand may be classified into the following groups:

1. Of Religious Interest, e.g., Badrinath, Kedarnath, Yamunotri, Gangotri, Gaumukh, Hemkund, Rudra Prayag;
2. Of Health and Scenic interest; e.g., Mussoorie, Rishikesh, Joshi math, Chakrata, Bhowali, Ranikhet, Kausani, Shahastradhara, Malsi deer park, Kempty Falls, Robber's Cave, Valley of Flowers, Mukteshwar, Corbett National Park, Pindari Glaciers;
3. Of Trekking and Mountaineering Interest; e.g., Auli, Dodital, Deorital, Har-ki-dun, Rupkund;

4. Of Defence Interest; e.g., Chakrata, Landsdowne, Ranikhet, Dehradun, Didihat.
5. Of Historical Interest; e.g., Dehradun, Tehri, Kalsi, Nerendra Nagar, Pithoragarh, Garur, etc.

Problems of Tourism Industry:

The tourist industry has great significance in the economic development of these places. However, the promotion of tourism oriented towards the sustainable, economic, social and environmental development of local people has to a large extent remained neglected. The tourist centres are experiencing a number of problems, specially in peak season, i.e., accommodation, transport, concentration, seasonality, information, publicity, infrastructural facilities, environment and other. Tourism in U.P. Hills has great potential as remunerative industry. Mountain tourism is an area that has the potential for providing alternative environmentally - friendly income and employment generation opportunities. The tourism industry in Uttarakhand is suffering from various problems in its development.

Transportation: Tourist movements are entirely dependent on the transport system. Tourist industry has always been assisted by the wide spread development of good transport system. Transport is an integral part of tourism as it makes travel possible. Various types of transport facilities are

available for visitors around the year in the Hill region. Due to rapid development of transport, the volume of traffic has increased. However, the tourist places of U.P. Himalayas are lacking the facility of rail, air and water transport. There has always been shortage of transport facility in the hill region, as a result tourism development has not taken place at a faster rate in Uttarakhand. The main lacuna in the development of tourism industry is that the tourist places are not well connected by good roads with each others. The conditions of most of the roads are not upto the mark. During rainy season, landslides usually disrupt traffic completely which require a proper system of repair and maintainence. Hike in transportation charges as a result of scarcity of transport facility during the peak season has become a yearly feature. This tendency discourages the tourists in this region.

Improved and intensive transport network is essential for the development of tourism industry in any area or region. Transport planning has a significant role to play in order to bring the tourists to Uttarakhand from over the country and outside. The provisions of wayside amenities, which are presently lacking in this region, are necessary to strengthen the smooth functioning of transport network. The facility of wayside amenities at different places along the roads will automatically encourage the visits of tourists. Emphasis should be given to the construction of roads interconnecting the main roads and linking the tourist places

with the interior of surrounding areas. Development of roads and vehicular movements is necessary in order to increase the number of tourists. Luxury and air-conditioned buses and cars are also required to ply between important stations to provide better facility to the rich tourists.

Accommodation: Facility of accommodation is a crucial factor in the development of tourism. Generally, tourists go to a particular place simply because the place is well equipped with good hotels, which provide excellent fooding, lodging and other facilities. Most of the tourist centres in Uttarakhand do not have sufficient number of hotel beds and supplementary accommodation to cope the demand of tourists. Generally, the hotels and supplementary accommodation are also not properly maintained. Problems related to accommodation in the tourist places during peak season are the main features of the tourism industry in the Himalayan region. Most of the hotels are of medium standard, costly for general tourists and unsuitable for visitors belonging to affluent society. The accommodation facilities at religious centres are of sub-standard and in a traditional form.

The first necessary thing for the development of tourism in Uttarakhand, is to strengthen accommodation facilities. Development in accommodation require sufficient fund. Therefore, provision should be made from Government to extend low interest loans to investors prepared to build new hotels in the region. Preference should be given to the local entrepreneurs in the development of accommodation at tourist

centres. Priority should be given to the construction of the hotels of ordinary standard, providing lodging and fooding on reasonable rates to attract the domestic tourists in great number. Similarly, some high standard hotels at reputed tourist places must be constructed to fulfil the requirement of the tourists of affluent section of society.

Seasonality: Seasonality is the peculiar characteristic of the tourism in the hill region. Tourists visit in these areas only for a limited period in a year. The seasonal visit of the tourists becomes uneconomical tourist affair. It is the most serious problem of the tourist centres in Uttarakhand as they have a short season of tourism. Tourist places of religious interest are particularly affected by the seasonal behaviour of the tourists. Though the places of recreational interest of Himalaya attract tourists throughout the year, but the number in winter months go down. Fluctuations are observed in the income levels and employment opportunities in the tourist areas due to seasonality. Shortage of accommodation, high prices, scarcity of basic amenities, deterioration in the quality of food and services during the period of peak season are the feature of seasonality in the tourism industry.

To reduce the problem of seasonality, it is necessary to provide amenities and maintain the movement of tourist by creating new tourist centres, improving capacity utilization, promoting winter games and sports and introducing other off-

centres. Priority should be given to the construction of the hotels of ordinary standard, providing lodging and fooding on reasonable rates to attract the domestic tourists in great number. Similarly, some high standard hotels at reputed tourist places must be constructed to fulfil the requirement of the tourists of affluent section of society.

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To reduce the problem of seasonality, it is necessary to provide amenities and maintain the movement of tourist by creating new tourist centres, improving capacity utilization, promoting winter games and sports and introducing other off-

season activities. Uttarakhand, by virtue of natural gift, has great potential to develop variety of sports during winter and to organise other activities. However, it would be difficult to reduce the seasonality due to climatic conditions in the places located in the greater imalayan ranges, such as Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, Yamunotri and Gaumukh.

Overcrowding : The tourist industry in the hill region of Uttar Pradesh suffers from the problem of congestion during the period of peak season, because there are too many tourists to be transported and accommodated. Problems of overcrowding becomes usual phenomenon of some tourist centres during peak season in Uttarakhand. Congestion causes unhygienic conditions, environmental pollution, bargaining, blackmarketing and sensitive behaviour of local suppliers of amenities at some places like Nainital, Mussoorie and Badrinath. This problem has become alarming to such an extent that these centres are losing the attraction for tourists gradually.

Concentration: The main characteristic of tourism in U.P. Himalaya is that the tourism industry is concentrated in few places. The concentration leads to the problem of congestion which has many associated repercussions. There is an indispensable need to spread the tourist industry more equitable throughout the hill region. Mussoorie, Nainital, Almora and Badrinath are the main centres where the

concentration of tourists becomes a problem during the peak of the summer. To minimise the congestion and concentration at particular centre, some satellite tourist spot development should be encouraged. The immense potentialities of tourism development in hill region need identification and concrete planning. To minimise the pressure of tourists in these centres, the surrounding places may be developed as complementary tourist resorts. For example, the surrounding areas of Nainital, such as Bhimtal, Bhowali, Sattal, Naukuchyatal, Jewolikote, etc. and of Mussoorie, such as Oak Pather, Kempty falls and chakrata may be developed for tourist interest.

Publicity: Publicity plays an important role in the development of tourist industry. In the developed countries, huge resources are spent in tourist publicity through television, radio, films, newspapers, pamphlets, folders and brochures. In the past, the publicity aspect of tourism has been neglected a lot in the planning of tourism industry for the hill region. It is observed that publicity is confined to the tourists at the centres only and no effort is made regarding the publicity of tourist centres outside the region, state and country. To develop tourism as an industry in Uttarakhand, there is great need of publicity about the tourist places and other resorts.

Information: Information is an important and foremost aspect of tourism and its development. Tourist, reaching at the

centre firstly wants to be familiar with the means of transport, facilities of accommodation, shopping centres, sight-seeing places, souvenir articles, local specialities, etc. This type of information system is not available in most of the tourist places in Uttarakhand. However, there are certain tourist places equipped with information bureaus operated by U.P. Tourism Department, but they are not easily available to the general tourists. A marked paucity is observed as far as information boards, road maps and guide maps at public places are concerned. Publicity of detailed information related to place of tourists' interest through appropriate media has great role in the development of tourism industry.

Ecology and Environment: The aspect of ecology and environment is directly related with the tourism, particularly in hills. Himalayas have always held a strange fascination for men of all walks of life. These are sources of inspiration to saints, poets, tourists, writers, intellectuals, scientists, hikers, trekkers, mountaineers, skiers and natural lovers. The number of such visitors increased enormously during recent years which led to the deterioration of environment and ecology. In the name of tourism and its development construction of roads, buildings, bridges and other picnic spots have taken place. The process of most of the construction is unscientific from the point of view of ecological balance of the region. The trekkers' routes and religious places have now turned into garbage

trails, containing food and juice tins, water bottles, beer bottles, chocolate papers, wrappers, plastics and other wastes.

The growth in the number of tourists, pilgrims, trekkers and mountaineers visiting in Uttarakhand is not the sufficient indicator of development of tourism industry in the Himalayan region, the impact of tourism on employment, income, ecology and environment is most important. However, increasing number of tourists is not necessarily associated with the damage of ecology in Uttarakhand, only if the flow of trekkers, tourists and mountaineers as well as infrastructural facilities can be guided and controlled properly. Conservation of environment and ecology is one of the main themes for tourism planning in hill areas. Utmost care is needed to keep the natural environment intact as far as possible. Development control rules should be devised to ensure that the design of tourism development is in complete conformity with the natural eco-system of hill habitat. By identifying the problems of environment and ecology in the Himalayan region, 'Guidelines for Tourism in Hill Areas' should be prepared and emphasis should be given to its wider publicity at massive scale. The guidelines for tourism should be full of instructions as to how to preserve the greenery, flora and fauna of the area. To preserve the environment and ecology, it is necessary to learn lesson from certain advance mountain countries and adopt useful rules and

regulations to save the Himalayan region from any further degradation.

Social and Cultural Pollution: Social and cultural impact is also one of the effects of tourism in the tourist centres. The local population has to interact with the tourists in one way or other. The social and cultural aspects are affected by the behaviour, habits and activities of the tourists. A much serious threat has been experienced by the communities of the tourist centres of U.P. Hills in the form of 'cultural and social pollution'. The local habits, lifestyle and traditions of hill residents are changing these days very rapidly due to the influence of people from outside. It has been observed that the old culture, traditions, norms and hospitality have vanished from some tourist centres of Uttarakhand.

By organising cultural shows, conferences, local fairs in the tourist centres, the local culture and tradition can be preserved and also cultural pollution can be minimised. Unwanted activities in the tourist places could be controlled by implementing strict code of conduct in the hill region. The participation of local people has crucial role in the preservation of social and cultural heritage.

Other Problems: In the tourist centres of Uttarakhand the facilities of infrastructural services, such as transport, accommodation, water supply, sewerage system, electricity,

telephone, etc. are by and large supplied by public authorities. The 'Super-structure Service' system such as air-conditioned coaches, motels, hotels, restaurants, cafes, bars, clubs, sports, recreation facilities available in these areas are supplied by private companies or individuals. However, the infrastructural facilities have not sprung up significantly at any tourist place of Uttarakhand.

Keeping in view the demand of the tourists from affluent sections, the super structure service system should also be developed. In this direction, individual entrepreneurs should be encouraged. Medical and health facilities are also essential services required in the tourist places. Generally these facilities are made according to the size of local population. But during peak season, shortage of medical facilities becomes very acute. Considering the requirement of medical facilities in the tourist places, the authorities should make alternative and temporary arrangements.

Government and Tourism Development:

In 1967, the Hill Development Board was established. Development of tourism was one of responsibilities given to the Board. With the establishment of Hill Development Board, the development process of tourism was started, but the process was concentrated in limited centres in the Hill region. In the year 1974, the Tourism Development Corporation was set up in Uttar Pradesh to take the responsibility of tourism activities and to boost up tourist

industry in the state. The Tourism Development Corporation constructed several tourist bungalows in the hill region and handed over to the Kumaon and Garhwal Development Corporations for their management. With the cooperation of U.P. Government Tourist Bureaus, the Tourism wings of the Kumaon and Garhwal Development Corporations have also made elaborate arrangements of conducted tours to various tourist spots in Uttarakhand.

In the sector of road transport, Government Transport Corporations, Public owned Motor Transport Unions, Taxi owners, and operators' union are engaged in providing travel facility to the visitors. Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam and Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam offer package - conducted tours and sightseeing.

Tourism Development in Eighth Five Year Plan

Initially a sum of Rs.9150.00 lakh was approved for tourism development in the state for Eighth Five Year Plan. Of which Rs.6650.00 lakh was approved for Hill region of the state. A sum of Rs.2765.91 lakh has been spent during the first two years of the Eighth Plan. In 1994-95, an outlay of Rs.4225.00 lakh had been approved and the share of U.P. hills was Rs.1000 lakh. An outlay of Rs.5879.00 lakh is proposed for the year 1995-96 containing Rs.1050.00 lakhs for hill region.

Table-1 gives the details of outlay and pattern of expenditure in some major heads of tourism development in Uttarakhand during Eighth Five Year Plan.

Table-1 : Outlay and Expenditure in Some Heads of Tourism Development in the Hill Region During Eighth Five Year Plan

(Rs. in lakh)

Heads of Expenditure	Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97) outlay	1992-93 Expenditure	1993-94 Expenditure	1994-95 Anticipated Expenditure	1995-96 outlay proposed
1. Tourist Infrastructure	4208.00	772.14	856.85	889.58	752.47
2. Tourist Centres	155.00	20.48	5.96	13.38	36.00
3. Tourist Accommodation	4053.00	751.66	850.89	876.20	714.47
4. Tourist Bungalow	1619.27	171.47	251.15	—	108.26
5. Wayside Amenities	33.55	10.00	—	—	—
6. Yatri Niwas	361.00	100.00	175.01	100.01	—
7. Development of Tourist Spots	1280.00	220.29	200.34	100.01	394.67
8. Other schemes	759.18	249.90	224.39	616.00	185.00

Source : Computed from Annual Report 1995-96. A supplement of Volume II, Government of Uttar Pradesh, State Planning Commission, April 1995.

Tourism Policy of the Government:

The state Government has chalked out a tourism policy in the state during Eighth Five Year Plan. Under the tourism policy an approach is being adopted that would ensure the best possible utilization of resources of the state for long run. Necessary tourism infrastructure has been created by the State Government. The infrastructure, thus, generated will cater not only the needs of the tourists but also create direct and indirect employment. With the fast changing economic scenario, it is considered that involvement of private sector will boost the tourism industry. A tourism policy is prepared to take care of tourism, which consists of a comprehensive package of incentive/facilities to private entrepreneurs for rapid development of the tourism infrastructure in the state.

Following are the main objectives of the tourism industry policy:

1. Employment generation;
2. Private investment;
3. Preservation of heritage and monuments;
4. Preservation of environment;
5. Diversification of tourism products,
6. Facilities for middle class;
7. Increasing accommodation facilities;

8. Local and domestic tourism, and
10. Human resource development strategy.

The state government has adopted the following strategy to fulfil the objectives of Tourism Industry Policy.

- (a) Area based approach for intensive and integrated development of tourism infrastructure.
- (b) As far as accommodation is concerned, the public sector phases will be privatised in phased manner with suitable modification and improvement in the existing facilities to attract heavy investment in private sector.
- (c) Private paying guest scheme to increase accommodation.
- (d) Improving transportation facilities to the tourists including road transport, and air taxi services.
- (e) Marketing tourist attractions in the state in National and International Scheme.
- (f) Coordinated approach of the different organs of the state in the National and International Scheme.
- (g) Improvement in training facilities for human resource development.

- (h) Improvement from Government of India and International agencies for creation of necessary infrastructure.

The state Government has identified the following thrust areas in the hill region under the scheme of tourism development.

- (i) Adventure sports areas in Pithoragarh, Ranikhet, Kudiyal, Auli, Chamba,
- (ii) Traditional yatra routes - Badrinath, Kedar Nath, Gangotri and Yamundotri.

Package of Incentives and Facilities:

The tourism industry policy envisages a package of incentives and facilities to the private entrepreneurs which will be available to the private entrepreneurs till 31st March 1999. The package includes:

(A) Infrastructure:

- (i) Nazul or Gaon sabha or acquired land of any department in the thrust area will be made available to the private entrepreneurs at 20 per cent of market price for the construction of starred hotel. Wherever such land is not available, the district Magistrate will help

entrepreneurs for purchasing land from land owners.

- (ii) Land near the starred Hotel compound will be made available free of cost for the purpose of developing green belt and management. However the ownership will remain with the government.
- (iii) The state government will develop necessary infrastructure like road, electricity, drinking water in the thrust areas on priority basis.
- (iv) There will be no levy or premium of any kind on the price and development charge the land procured for development authority in Urban Areas.

- (B) Concession in Entertainment Tax, Luxury Tax.
- (C) Facilities for Bar in Hotels
- (D) Promotion of Handicraft as Souvenir
- (E) Paying Guest Facilities

The state Government has formulated an ambitious scheme to develop thrust areas. A huge investment is being made with the assistance of Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) in the development of infrastructural facilities viz., widening of roads, creation of wayside amenities, improvement in electricity supply, water supply, sanitation, landscaping, etc. The Government has started an airstrip in Pithoragarh and is likely to construct two more in Chamoli and Uttarkashi.

Policy Guidelines for Tourism Development in Hills:

At the time of formulation of policies for tourism development in the hill areas, the following policy guidelines should be taken into consideration:

1. Tourism should be managed such a way that it should lead to sustainable mountain and community development..
2. Policies and programmes related to tourism development should promote gainful employment to local communities. Special consideration should be given to the target groups such as poor sections of society, S.C., S.T., and women in terms of providing income and employment opportunities.
3. Women should also be encouraged for entrepreneurship in tourism industry which would promote their involvement in community development. Moreover, tourism should be oriented towards sustainable economic, social and environmental development of local communities.
4. Identification and promotion of skills and capabilities of local communities is essential for human resource development. Mechanism have to be developed to enhance the skill of the target groups, so that the benefits of tourism may reach to them.

5. Tourism products, including goods and services for tourists should be developed around the skill and resources of local communities, promoting markets and marketing for products.
6. Policies for tourism development should help to the protection and conservation of tourism assets. Special emphasis should also be given to the preservation and maintenance of cultural assets, artifacts and traditional crafts.
7. Steps should be taken to strengthen tourism facilities and infrastructure including safety and security measures for tourists.
8. In the promotion of hill tourism, it is essential to strengthen the relevant institutions at central, regional and local levels and to encourage coordination regarding policy and programme formulation in tourism development with the private sector, voluntary organisations and other local community groups.
9. Private sector and local community investment in the development of tourism-related infrastructure should be properly encouraged and coordinated.
10. Accessibility to information related to tourism in the hill area should widely be made to the tourists. A profile of the tourism area should be developed.

11. Compulsory rules should be implemented to follow the code of conduct for visitors as well as the host population which is an important element in linking tourism development with local community development.
12. A research survey related to tourism should be conducted in Uttarakhand to identify the tourist assets, resources, level of basic infrastructure, provision of health, education, communication factors influencing economy, culture, environment, type of tourism, nature of accommodation and utilities, trend and pattern of visitors etc. This should also incorporate inventory survey which needs to focus on the nature and type of resource, socio-economic conditions, flora and fauna, the condition of forests and vegetation in the tourist area.